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Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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II. Replies received from Member States

Bangladesh

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[29 June 2007]

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation can play a very vital role in South Asia to introduce and practise confidence-building among its member States.

Ukraine

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[11 May 2007]

Resolution 61/81: Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Ukraine is facilitating the establishment of new mechanisms to build confidence and security on the basis of mutual understanding and openness in the conduct of politico-military activities, and is playing an active role in regional and subregional arms-control systems.

1. The normative basis for international cooperation in confidence- and security-building in the context of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the 1999 Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures.

In accordance with chapter X of the Document, Ukraine is developing bilateral cooperation with neighbouring States to build confidence and security.

Ukraine is actively working with Belarus, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, through the following bilateral intergovernmental agreements:

The agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Hungary on measures to build confidence and security and on the development of bilateral military relations;

The agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Slovak Republic on additional measures to build confidence and security;

The agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland on confidence and security measures;

The agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on additional confidence and security measures.

These agreements provide for prior notification of military activities, for invitations to observe exercises and for inspections of and visits to military units.

In accordance with the agreements, the parties should each conduct several confidence- and security-building measures per year in addition to the quota of inspections established in the 1999 Vienna Document.

Since the entry into force of the bilateral agreements aimed at developing bilateral regional cooperation (2001 in the case of Slovakia; 2002 in the case of Belarus and Hungary; 2004 in the case of Poland), 75 measures have been conducted in Ukraine and elsewhere.

The agreements themselves provide for annual working meetings to assess implementation of the bilateral intergovernmental agreements; these will enable open dialogue to take place on the establishment of new mechanisms for cooperation.

In particular, active cooperation is being developed in the framework of bilateral joint training inspections with Hungary and Slovakia, providing the opportunity to develop common outlooks on existing arms-control mechanisms, to bring the positions of States closer together in that regard and to open new avenues to transparency of military activity.

An important step in confidence-building is for parties to an agreement to refrain from conducting tactical exercises at battalion scale and higher in the vicinity of the borders with their neighbours.

2. Ukraine believes the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe to be a major instrument for building regional security.

In this connection, Ukraine is complying fully with its treaty obligations.

In addition, Ukraine has unilaterally committed itself to additional reduction of the weapons and military equipment thresholds:

Battle tanks: from 4,080 to 3,200;

Artillery systems: from 4,040 to 3,600;

Combat aircraft: from 1,090 to 800;

Attack helicopters: from 330 to 250.

Ukraine is continuing to liquidate its overall quantity of weapons and military equipment beyond the levels provided for in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. As an example, the following levels had been reached in April 2007:

Battle tanks: 3,094 (ceiling: 3,200);

Armoured combat vehicles: 4,250 (ceiling: 5,050);

Artillery systems: 3,251 (ceiling: 3,600);

Combat aircraft: 556 (ceiling: 800);

Attack helicopters: 170 (ceiling: 250).

In order to implement the unilateral additional commitments regarding the Ukrainian coastal defence forces and marines, Ukraine provides other States with yearly information on their weapons and military equipment. The quantities in question have decreased substantially and stand at the following levels in 2007:

Coastal defence forces:

Battle tanks: 39 (ceiling: 271);

Armoured combat vehicles: 131 (ceiling: 484);

Artillery systems: 36 (ceiling: 160).

Marines:

Armoured combat vehicles: 53 (ceiling: 265);

Artillery systems: 7 (ceiling: 48).

During 2006, the strength of the Ukrainian armed forces fell by 16,800. The reduction process will continue in accordance with the programme of development of the Ukrainian armed forces for 2006 to 2011.

3. The Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in the Naval Field in the Black Sea, signed in Kyiv, has been in force since 2003. This politically binding document provides for measures aimed at improving regional security and stability and at establishing relations of good neighbourliness and cooperation.

Within the framework of the Document, the coastal States (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine) exchange information of a navigational, hydrographic and meteorological nature.

In addition, the participating States:

Voluntarily inform each other of ecological problems and conduct joint exercises and training in that field;

Cooperate to counter terrorism and other threats and challenges to security, including where necessary, providing assistance to combat organized crime and illicit trafficking in drugs and weapons;

Take steps to prevent interference in maritime navigation and air traffic with the aim of helping to eliminate unjustified tension and reducing the risk of confrontation.

The Document will provide an opportunity to widen and deepen contacts between the naval structures of the participating States and to organize joint activities (annual naval exercises; visits to naval bases; sports competitions and educational and cultural events).

One of the directions of activity of the Ukrainian armed forces in 2006 and 2007, with the aim of establishing a zone of stability and mutual confidence around Ukraine, has been to step up bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the context of regional security systems, including:

1. In the framework of cooperation with the member States of the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development:

A working group on politico-military cooperation has been established as an operational body of GUAM;

A plan of work for politico-military cooperation has been established for 2007;

The statutes, structure and functions of the GUAM peacekeeping division have been determined (its establishment should be completed in 2007).

2. In the framework of cooperation with European Union member States in the context of the European Security and Defence Policy:

A draft map has been established for political dialogue and reform and for cooperation in foreign and security policy, in the form of the new basic agreement between Ukraine and the European Union (based on the results of the second round of negotiations on 2 and 3 April 2007);

A draft memorandum of understanding and a technical agreement on the formation of a Ukrainian-Polish-Lithuanian battalion to fulfil joint functions in the field of security have been established (Poland);

Bilateral consultations on military issues have taken place in connection with European and regional security and a review has been undertaken of security and defence strategy documents (Slovakia);

Expert-level consultations have been planned on issues connected with the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defence Policy, arms control, policy planning, consular matters, regional cooperation, crisis resolution, and support for the association of Ukraine with a variety of measures in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (Hungary).

3. In the framework of cooperation with the member States of the Southeast Europe Defence Ministers' Council:

Practical issues surrounding Ukraine's participation in the Multinational Peace Force South Eastern Europe are being examined;

The South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG) has been supplied with contingents and freight using flights between Costanza and Kabul;

Ukraine has joined Southeast Europe Defence Ministerial initiatives:

The Southeast Europe Simulation Network (SEESIM);

Satellite Interconnection of Military Hospitals (SEDM/MIHO);

The Defence/Military Support to Weapons of Mass Destruction Counter-Proliferation, Border Security and Counter-Terrorism (CBSC) Project;

Cooperation on Defence Industries, Research and Technology (SEEDIRET);

Education cooperation (SEMEC).

4. In the framework of Ukrainian cooperation with the Visegrad Four countries:

During defence ministers' political consultations, common approaches were developed to supplying Ukraine with assistance to reform its military sector and develop its armed forces (Visegrad Four plan of assistance to the armed forces of Ukraine to 2010);

Proposals have been made to the Government Committee for the establishment of an international consortium with the membership of the chemical rescue society, a Polish limited company, for the use of its "blend" in Ukraine.

5. In the framework of bilateral cooperation between Ukraine and Turkey, as a member of the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group, a Protocol was signed between the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine and the General Staff of the Turkish armed forces for cooperation in exchanging information in the context of Operation Black Sea Harmony.

6. In the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States Council of Defence Ministers (Ukraine is an observer):

Basic guidelines were established for the work of the Subcommittee for Security Issues of the Ukrainian-Russian Interstate Commission (based on the results of the first meeting in December 2006); they include: deeper relations between branches of the armed forces and varieties of troops; continuing resourcing of weapons and military equipment; collaboration on matters relating to the use of ammunition and missile fuel components;

Collaboration with Azerbaijan is continuing to establish an international centre to train aviation personnel and specialists in the use of aviation for countering terrorism.

Overall, Ukraine's own initiatives and its active participation in regional and subregional confidence-building measures help to preserve peace and guarantee regional stability.